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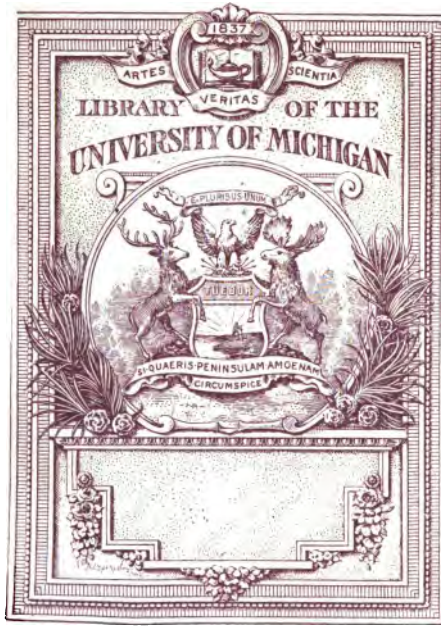

THE GIFT OF
Pres. J. B. Angell

AN

ESSAY ON MAN:

101553

IN

FOUR EPISTLES

TO

HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE

BY ALEXANDER POPE.

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AN

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE I.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to the Universe.

Of Man, in the abstract—That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, 17—66. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, 69, &c. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, 77, &c. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, 113—122. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, 123—172. The unreasonableness of his complaints against providence, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the angels, on the other the bodily qualifications of the brutes, 173. That to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, 179—206. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of

reature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The radations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; hat reason alone countervails all the other faculties, 207 -232. How much farther this order and subordination f living creatures may extend above and below us; were ry part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation, must be destroyed. The ex- ravagance, madness, and pride, of such a desire, 233— 58. The consequence of all, the absolute submission ue to providence, both as to our present and future tate, 281.

AWAKE, my ST. JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings:
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man,
A mighty maze! but not without a plan:
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit,
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore,
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I. Say first, of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of man, what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumber'd though the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.

He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied beings people every star,
May tell why heaven has made us as we are.
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connexions, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd through? Or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?
II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove.
Of systems possible, if 'tis confest,
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;
Then, in the scale of reasoning life 'tis plain,
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has placed him wrong?
Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, though labored on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain:

In God's one single can its end produce,
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So man, who here, seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel or verges to some goal:
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Now wears a garland, an Egyptian god;
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's use and end;
Why doing, suffering, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not man 's imperfect, heav'n in fault:
Say rather, man 's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blest to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescribed, their present state;
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by heaven,

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore:
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always TO BE blest:
The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates on a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heaven,
Some safer world, in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To BE, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against providence:
Call imperfection, what thou fanciest such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet say, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;

If man alone engross not heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there;
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the GOD of God.
In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
All quit the sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against the eternal cause.

V. Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine?
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, 'tis for mine:
For me kind nature wakes her genial power;
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower:
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures bring;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.'

But errs not nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
'No,' 'tis replied 'the first almighty cause
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;
The exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?'—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then nature deviates; and can man do less?

As much that end a constant course requires
Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men forever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?
Who knows, but he whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
Account for moral as for natural things:
Why charge we heaven in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right, is to submit.
Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind,
That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI. What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And, little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downward, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?
Nature to these, without profusion kind,
The proper organs, proper powers assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;

All in exact proportion to their state,
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is heaven unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing, if not blest with all?
The bliss of man, (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think BEYOND mankind;
No powers of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics given,
To inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart, and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish, that heaven had left him still
The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill!
Who finds not providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends:
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight, betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
A hound sagacious on the tainted green;

Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood!
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true,
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew!
How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compared, half reasoning elephant, with thine!
Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier;
Forever separate, yet forever near!
Remembrance and reflection, how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide!
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass the insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one?

VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no man can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing.—On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale 's destroyed:
From nature's chain, whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to the amazing whole;
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole, must fall.
Let earth unbalanc'd, from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—For whom? For thee?
Vile worm! O madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear, repin'd
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd, for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the task or pains,
The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;

To him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects and equals all.
X. Cease then, nor ORDER Imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear;
Safe in the hand of one disposing power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, "Whatever IS, is RIGHT."

EPISTLE II.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Himself as an Individual.

The business of man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature; His powers and frailties, and the limits of his capacity, 43. The two principles of man, self-love, and reason, both necessary; self-love the stronger, and why; their end the same, 83. The passions, and their use, 83—120. The predominant passion, and its force, 122—150. Its tendency in directing men to different purposes, 153, &c. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, 167. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things separate, and evident. What is the office of reason, 187, &c. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, 209. That, however the

ends of providence and general good are answered in our passions, and imperfections, 230, &c. How usefully they are distributed to all orders of men, 233. How useful they are to society, 241, and to individuals, 253. In every state, and in every age of life, 263, &c.

I. Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is Man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused, or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
Go, soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
Or tread the mazy round his followers trod,
And quitting sense call imitating God;
As eastern priests in giddy circles run,
And turn their heads to imitate the sun.

Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule!
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!
Superior beings, when of late they saw
A mortal man unfold all nature's law,
Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,
And showed a NEWTON, as we show an ape.
Could he, who rules the rapid comet bind,
Describe or fix one movement of his mind?
Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
Explain his own beginning or his end?
Alas, what wonder! man's superior part
Unchecked may rise, and climb from art to art;
But when his own great work is but begun,
What reason weaves, by passion is undone.
Trace science then, with modesty thy guide;
First strip off all her equipage of pride:
Deduct what is but vanity or dress,
Or learning's luxury, or idleness:
Or tricks to show the strength of human brain,
Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain?
Expunge the whole, or lop the excrescent parts
Of all our vices have created arts;
Then see how little the remaining sum,
Which served the past, and must the times to come!
II. Two principles in human nature reign;
Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain:
Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
Each works its end, to move or govern all:
And to their proper operation still;
Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.
Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
Reason comparing balance rules the whole.

Man, but for that, no action could attend
And, but for this, were active to no end.
Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;
Or, meteor-like, flame lawless through the void,
Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
Most strength the moving principle requires;
Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.
Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,
Form'd but to check, deliberate, and advise.
Self-love, still stronger, as its object 's nigh;
Reason 's at distance, and in prospect lie:
That sees immediate good by present sense;
Reason, the future and the consequence.
Thicker than arguments, temptations throng,
At best, more watchful this, but that more strong.
The action of the stronger to suspend,
Reason still use, to reason still attend,
Attention habit and experience gains;
Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains.
Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,
More studious to divide, than to unite;
And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
With all the rash dexterity of wit.
Wits, just like fools, at war about a name,
Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.
Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire;
But greedy that, its object would devour,
This, taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r.
Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

III. Modes of self-love the passions we may call:
'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all:
But since not every good we can divide,
And reason bids us for our own provide:
Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
List under reason, and deserve her care;
Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,
Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name.

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
Their virtue fix'd: 'tis fix'd as in a frost;
Contracted all, retiring to the breast;
But strength of mind is exercise, not rest:
The rising tempest puts in act the soul;
Parts it may ravage, but preserve the whole.
On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
Reason the chart, but passion is the gale;
Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.

Passions, like elements, though born to fight,
Yet mix'd and softened, in his work unite:
These 'tis enough to temper and employ;
But what composes man, can man destroy?
Suffice that reason keep to nature's road,
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.

Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train;
Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,
These mixed with art, and to due bounds confined,
Make and maintain, the balance of the mind:
The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife
Gives all the strength and color of our life.
Pleasures are ever in our hands and eyes;
And when in act they cease, in prospect rise:

Present to grasp, and future still to find,
The whole employ of body and of mind,
All spread their charms, but charm not all alike;
On different senses, different objects strike;
Hence different passions more or less inflame,
As strong or weak, the organs of the frame;
And hence one master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.
As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death;
The young disease that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength:
So, cast and mingled with his very frame,
The mind's disease, its ruling passion came;
Each vital humor, which should feel the whole,
Soon flows to this, in body and in soul:
Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
As the mind opens, and its functions spread,
Imagination plies her dangerous art,
And pours it all upon the peccant part.
Nature its mother, habit is its nurse;
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;
Reason itself but gives it edge and power;
As heaven's blest beam turns vinegar more sour;
We, wretched subjects, though no lawful sway,
In this weak queen some favorites still obey:
Ah! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,
What can she more than tell us we are fools?
Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!
Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade
The choice we make, or justify it made;

Proud of an easy conquest all along,
She but removes weak passions for the strong:
So, when small humors gather to a gout,
The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out.
  Yes, nature's road must ever be preferr'd;
Reason is here no guide, but still a guard;
'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
And treat this passion more as friend than foe:
A mightier power the strong direction sends,
And several men impels to several ends:
Like varying winds, by other passions tost,
This drives them constant to a certain coast.
Let power or knowledge, gold or glory, please,
Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease;
Thro' life 'tis follow'd e'en at life's expense;
The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
All, all alike, find reason on their side.
  The eternal art, educing good from ill,
Grafts on this passion our best principle:
'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd,
Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd:
The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
And in one interest body acts with mind.
  As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
On savage stocks inserted learn to bear,
The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
Wild nature's vigor working at their root.
What crops of wit and honesty appear
From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
E'en av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;

Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
Is gentle love, and charms all womankind:
Envy, to which the ignoble mind 's a slave,
Is emulation in the learned or brave;
Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.
Thus nature gives us, (let it check our pride)
The virtue nearest to our vice allied:—
Reason the bias turns to good from ill,
And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.
The fiery soul abhorr'd in Cataline,
In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine.
The same ambition can destroy or save,
And makes a patriot, as it makes a knave.
IV. This light and darkness in our chaos joined,
What shall divide? The God within the mind.
Extremes in nature equal ends produce.
In man they join in some mysterious use;
Though each by turns the other's bounds invade,
As, in some well wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the difference is too nice,
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice.
Fools! Who from hence into the notion fall,
That vice and virtue there is none at all.
If white and black blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?
Ask your own heart; and nothing is so plain;
'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain.
V. Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar to her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

But where the extreme of vice was ne'er agreed:
Ask where's the north? at York, 'tis on the Tweed;
At Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
No creature owns it in the first degree,
But thinks his neighbor farther gone than he:
E'en those who dwell beneath its very zone,
Or never feel the rage, or never own;
What happier natures shrink at with affright,
The hard inhabitant contends is right.

Virtuous and vicious every man must be,
Few in the extreme, but all in the degree;
The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise,
And e'en the best, by fits what they despise.
'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill,
For, vice or virtue, SELF directs it still;
Each individual seeks a several goal;
But heaven's great view is one, and that the whole;
That counterworks each folly and caprice;
That disappoints the effect of every vice;
That happy frailties to all ranks applied,
Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride;
Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
To kings presumption, and to crowds belief:
That, virtue's ends from vanity can raise,
Which seeks no interest, no reward but praise;
And build on wants, and on defects of mind,
The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.'

Heaven, forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
[redacted]each on other for assistance call,
[redacted]ne man's weakness grows the strength of all.

Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
The common interest, or endear the tie:
To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
Each home-felt joy that life inherits here;
Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,
Those joys, those loves, those interests to resign:
Taught, half by reason, half by mere decay,
To welcome death, and calmly pass away.
Whate'er the passion, knowledge, fame, or pelf,
Not one will change his neighbor with himself.
The learn'd is happy, nature to explore;
The fool is happy that he knows no more;
The rich is happy in the plenty given;
The poor contents him with the care of heaven.
See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
The sot a hero, lunatic a king;
The starving chymist in his golden views
Supremely blest; the poet in his muse.
See some strange comfort every state attend,
And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend;
See some fit passion every age supply;
Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.
Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite:
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and prayer books are the toys of age:
Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before;
Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er!
Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays,
Those painted clouds that beautify our days:

Each want of happiness by hope supplied, 285
And each vacuity of sense by pride:
These build as fast as knowledge can destroy:
In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy;
One prospect lost, another still we gain;
And not a vanity is given in vain; 290
E'en mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
The scale to measure others' wants by thine.
See! and confess, one comfort still must rise;
'Tis this, though MAN'S A FOOL, yet GOD is WISE. 294

EPISTLE III.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Society.

The whole universe one system of society, verse 7, &c. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, 27. The happiness of animals mutual, 49. Reason or instinct operate alike to the good of each individual, 79.—Reason or instinct operate alike to society, in all animals, 109. How far society is carried by instinct, 115; how much farther by reason, 128. Of that which is called the state of nature, 144. Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, 166; and in the forms of society, 176.—Origin of political societies, 196. Origin of monarchy, 207. Patriarchal government, 212. Origin of true religion, and goverment, from the same principle of love, 231. Origin of superstition and tyranny, from the same principle of fear, 237. The influence of self-love, operating to the social and public good, 266. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle, 285. Mixed government, 288. Various forms of each, and true end of all, 300, &c.

HERE then we rest: "The universal cause
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."

In all the madness of superfluous health,
The train of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be present night and day,
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

I. Look round our world; behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.
See plastic nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend,
Attract, attracted to, the next in place
Form'd and impell'd its neighbor to embrace.
See matter next, with various life endued,
Press to one centre still, the general good.
See dying vegetables life sustain,
See life dissolving vegetate again:
All forms that perish, other forms supply,
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die,)
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all-preserving soul
Connects each being, greatest with the least;
Made beast an aid of man, and man of beast;
All serv'd, all serving: nothing stands alone;
The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.
Has God, thou fool, worked solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly spread the flowery lawn.
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own, and raptures swell the note.

The bounding steed you pompously bestride,
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?
The birds of Heaven shall vindicate their grain.
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer:
The hog, that ploughs not, nor obeys thy call,
Lives on the labors of this lord of all.

Know, nature's children all divide her care;
The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.
While man exclaims, "See all things for my use!"
"See man for mine!" replies a pamper'd goose:
And just as short of reason he must fall,
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the powerful still the weak control;
Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole:
Nature that tyrant checks: He only knows,
And helps another creature's wants and woes.
Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
Admires the jay, the insect's gilded wings?
Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings?
Man cares for all: To birds he gives his woods,
To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods:
For some his interest prompts him to provide,
For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride:
All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
The extensive blessing of his luxury;
That very life his learned hunger craves,
He saves from famine, from the savage saves;
Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast,
And, till he ends the being, makes it blest:

Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
Than favor'd man by touch ethereal slain.
The creature had its feast of life before;
Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er!
To each unthinking being, Heaven a friend,
Gives not the useless knowledge of its end:
To man imparts it; but with such a view,
As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too:
The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear,
Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
Great standing miracle! that heaven assign'd
Its only thinking thing, this turn of mind.

II. Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,
Know, all enjoy that power which suits them best;
To bliss alike by that direction tend,
And find the means proportioned to their end.
Say, where full instinct is the unerring guide,
What pope or council can they need beside?
Reason, however able, cool at best,
Cares but for service, or but serves when prest,
Stays till we call, and then not often near;
But honest instinct comes a volunteer,
Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit,
While still too wide or short is human wit;
Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,
Which heavier reason labors at in vain.
This too serves always, reason never long;
One must go right, the other may go wrong.
See then the acting and comparing powers,
One in their nature, which are two in ours!
And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood
To shun their poison, and to choose their food?
Prescient, the tides or tempest to withstand,
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?
Who made the spider parallels design,
Sure as De Moivre, without rule or line?
Who bid the stork, Columbus like, explore
Heavens not his own, and worlds unknown before?
Who calls the council, states the certain day;
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, founds
Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds:
But as he framed the whole, the whole to bless,
On mutual wants build mutual happiness;
So, from the first eternal order ran,
And creature linked to creature, man to man,
Whate'er of life all quickening either keeps,
Or breathes through air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
Or pours profuse on earth, and nature feeds
The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood,
Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
Each sex desires alike, 'till two are one.
Nor ends the pleasure with the first embrace;
They love themselves a third time in their race.
Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend:
The young dismissed to wander earth or air,
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
Another love succeeds, another race.

A longer care man's helpless kind demands;
The longer care contracts more lasting bands;
Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,
At once extend the interest and the love:
With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn;
Each virtue in each passion take its turn;
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
That graft benevolence on charities.
Still as one brood, and as another rose,
These natural love maintained, habitual those:
The last, scarce ripened into perfect man,
Saw helpless him from whom their life began:
Memory and forecast just returns engage;
That pointed back to youth, this on to age;
While pleasure, gratitude and hope combin'd,
Still spreads the interest and preserve the kind.

IV. Nor think, in nature's state they blindly trod;
The state of nature was the reign of God;
Self-love and social at her birth began,
Union the bond of all things, and of man.
Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walked with beast, joint-tenant of the shade;
The same his table, and the same his bed;
No murder cloth'd him, and no murder fed.
In the same temple, the resounding wood,
All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God:
The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest:
Heaven's attribute was universal care,
And man's prerogative to rule, but spare.
Ah! how unlike the man of times to come!
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;—

Who, foe to nature, hears the general groan,
Murders their species, and betrays his own.
But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds:
The fury-passions from that blood began,
And turned on man, a fiercer savage, man.
See him from nature rising slow to art:
To copy instinct then was reason's part.
Thus then to man the voice of nature spake—
"Go, from the creatures thy instructions take:
Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
Learn from the beast the physic of the field;
Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
Here too all forms of social union find,
And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind:
Here subterranean works and cities see;
There towns aerial on the waving tree.
Learn each small people's genius, policies,
The ant's republic, and the realm of bees;
How those in common all their wealth bestow,
And anarchy without confusion know;
And these forever, though a monarch reign,
Their separate cells, and properties maintain.
Mark what unvaried laws preserve each state,
Laws, wise as nature, and as fixed as fate.
In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,
Entangle justice in her net of law,
And right, too rigid, harden into wrong;
Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.

Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures sway,
Thus let the wiser make the rest obey.
And for those arts mere instinct could afford,
Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd."
V. Great nature spoke; observant man obey'd;
Cities were built, societies were made:
Here rose one little state, another near
Grew by like means, and joined thro' love or fear.
Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
And there the streams in purer rills descend?
What war could ravish, commerce could bestow;
And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.
Converse and love, mankind might strongly draw,
When love was liberty, and nature law.
Thus states were form'd: the name of king unknown,
'Till common interest placed the sway in one.
'Twas VIRTUE ONLY, (or in arts or arms,
Diffusing blessings, or averting harms,)
The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,
A prince, the father of a people made.
VI. 'Till then, by nature crown'd, each patriarch sate,
King, priest, and parent, of his growing state;
On him, their second providence, they hung,
Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,
Taught to command the fire, control the flood,
Draw forth the monsters of the abyss profound,
Or fetch the aerial eagle to the ground;
'Till drooping, sickening, dying, they began
Whom they rever'd as God, to mourn as man:
Then, looking up, from sire, to sire explor'd
One great First Father, and that first ador'd.

On plain tradition that this all begun,
Convey'd unbroken faith from sire to son.
The worker from the work distinct was known,
And simpler reason never sought but one:
Ere wit oblique had broke that steady light,
Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right:
To virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod,
And own'd a father, when he own'd a God.
Love, all the faith, and all the allegiance then,
For nature knew no right divine in men:
Nor ill could fear in God, and understood
A sovereign being, but a sovereign good.
True faith, true policy, united ran,
That was but love of God, and this of man.

Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,
The enormous faith of many made for one;
That proud exception to all nature's laws,
T' invert the world, and counterwork its cause?
Force first made conquest, and that conquest law;
'Till superstition taught the tyrant awe.
Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,
And gods of conquerors, slaves of subjects made:
She, 'midst the lightning's blaze, and thunder's sound,
When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the ground,
She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray
To Power unseen, and mightier far than they:
She, from the rending earth, and bursting skies,
Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise:
Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes;
Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods;
Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust:

Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.
Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
And hell was built on spite, and heaven on pride.
Then sacred seemed the ethereal vault no more:
Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore;
Then first the Flamen tasted living food,
Next his grim idol, smear'd with human blood;
With heaven's own thunders shook the world below,
And played the God an engine on his foe.
So drives self-love, through just and through unjust,
To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust;
The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
Of what restrains him, government and laws.
For what one likes, if others like as well,
What serves one will, when many wills rebel?
How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake,
A weaker may surprise, a stronger take?
His safety must his liberty restrain:
All join to guard what each desires to gain.
Forced into virtue thus, by self-defence,
E'en kings learn'd justice and benevolence:
Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
And found the private in the public good.
'Twas then the studious head or generous mind,
Follower of God, or friend of human kind,
Poet or patriot, rose but to restore
The faith that moral Nature gave before;
Resumed her ancient light, not kindled new;
If not God's image, yet his shadow drew;
Taught power's due use to people and to kings,
Taught not to slack, nor strain its tender strings,

The less or greater set so justly true,
That touching one must strike the other too;
'Till jarring interest of themselves create
Th' according music of a well mix'd state.
Such is the world's great harmony, that springs
From order, union, full consent of things:
Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made
To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade;
More powerful each as needful to the rest,
And, in proportion as it blesses, blest;
Draw to one point, and to one centre bring
Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.
For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administer'd is best:
For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right;
In faith and hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind's concern is charity;
All must be false that thwart this one great end;
And all of God, that bless mankind, or mend.
Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
On their own axis as the planets run,
To make at once their circle round the sun;
So two consistent motions act the soul;
And one regards itself, and one the whole.
Thus God and nature link'd the general frame,
And bade self-love and social be the same.

EPISTLE IV.

Of the Nature and State of Man, with respect to Happiness.

False notions of happiness, philosophical and popular, answered, from verse 19 to 27. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all, 30. God intends happiness to be equal; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular laws, 37. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, happiness is not made to consist in these, 51. But notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness amongst mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of hope and fear, 70. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as it is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good man has here the advantage, 77. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of nature, or of fortune, 94. The folly of expecting that God should alter his general laws in favor of particulars, 121. That we are not judges who are good; but that whoever they are, they must be happiest, 133, &c. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue, 167. That even these can make no man happy, without virtue—instanced in riches, 185. —Honors, 193. Nobility, 205. Greatness, 217. Fame, 237. Superior talents, 259, &c. With pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, 269, &c. That virtue alone constitutes happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect is eternal, 309. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the *order of providence* here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, 316, &c.

Oh Happiness! our being's end and aim!
Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy name:

That something still which prompts the eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die:
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool and wise.
Plant of celestial seed! if dropt below,
Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
Fair opening to some courts, propitious shine,
Or deep with diamonds in the flaming mine?
Twined with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
Where grows? where grows it not? If vain our toil,
We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:
Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere,
'Tis no-where to be found, or every where:
'Tis never to be sought, but always free,
And fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.

I. Ask of the learn'd the way! The learn'd are blind:
This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind;
Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,
Those call it pleasure, and contentment these.
Some, sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain:
Some, swell'd to gods, confess e'en virtue vain;
Or indolent to each extreme they fall,
To trust in every thing, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less
Than this, that happiness is happiness?

II. Take nature's path, and mad opinions leave;
All states can reach it, and all heads conceive:
Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;
There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;
And, mourn our various portions as we please,
Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, man, the "Universal Cause
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;"
And makes what happiness we justly call,
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.
There 's not a blessing individuals find,
But some way leans and harkens to the kind:
No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
No cavern'd hermit rests self-satisfied.
Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend.
Abstract what others feel, what others think,
All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink:
Each has his share, and who would more obtain,
Shall find the pleasure pays not half the pain.
Order is heaven's first law; and this confest,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest,
More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.
Heaven to mankind impartial we confess,
If all are equal in their happiness;
But mutual wants this happiness increase;
All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace.
Condition, circumstance, is not the thing;
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,
In who obtain defence, or who defend,
In him who is, or him who finds a friend:
Heaven breathes through every member of the whole
One common blessing, as one common soul.
But fortune's gifts, if each alike possest,
And each were equal, must not all contest?
If then to all men happiness was meant,
God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
And these be happy call'd, unhappy those;
But heaven's just balance equal will appear,
While those are placed in hope, and these in fear:
Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
But future views of better or of worse.
Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies?
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

III. Know, all the good that individuals find,
Or God and nature meant to mere mankind,
Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.
But health consists with temperance alone;
And peace, O virtue! peace is all thy own.
The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain;
But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.
Say, in pursuit of profit or delight,
Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right?
Of vice or virtue, whether bless'd or cursed,
Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?
Count all the advantage prosperous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains:
And grant the bad what happiness they would,
One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

Oh, blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best,
Best knows the blessing, and will most be bless'd,
But fools the good alone unhappy call,
For ills or accidents that chance to all.
See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just!

See godlike Turenne prostrate on the dust!
See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife!
Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?
Say, was it virtue, more though Heaven ne'er gave,
Lamented Digby! sunk thee to the grave?
Tell me, if virtue made the son expire,
Why, full of days and honor, lives the sire?
Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,
When nature sicken'd, and each gale was death?
Or why so long (in life if long can be)
Lent Heaven a parent to the poor and me?
What makes all physical or moral ill?
There deviates nature, and here wanders will.
God sends not ill, if rightly understood,
Or partial ill is universal good,
Or change admits, or nature lets it fall,
Short, and but rare, till man improved it all.
We just as wisely might of Heaven complain,
That righteous Abel was destroy'd by Cain,
As that the virtuous son is ill at ease
When his lewd father gave the dire disease.
Think we, like some weak prince, the Eternal Cause
Prone for his favorites to reverse his laws!
IV. Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?
On air or sea new motions be impress'd,
Oh blameless Bethel! to relieve thy breast?
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?
Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?
V. But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better shall we have?

A kingdom of the just then let it be:
But first consider how those just agree.
The good must merit God's peculiar care!
But who, but God, can tell us who they are?
One thinks on Calvin Heaven's own spirit fell;
Another deems him instrument of hell:
If Calvin feels Heaven's blessing, or its rod,
This cries there is, and that, there is no God.
What shocks one part will edify the rest,
Nor with one system can they all be bless'd.
The very best will variously incline,
And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.—This world, 'tis true,
Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too;
And which more bless'd? who chain'd his country, say,
Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day?
VI. 'But sometimes virtue starves while vice is fed.'
What then? Is the reward of virtue bread?
That, vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil;
The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
The good man may be weak, be indolent;
Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
But grant him riches, your demand is o'er?
'No—shall the good want health, the good want power?'
Add health and power and every earthly thing—
'Why bounded power? why private? why no king?
Nay, why external for internal given?
Why is not man a god, and earth a heaven?'
Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
God gives enough, while he has more to give;
Immense the power, immense were the demand;

Say, at what part of nature will they stand?
What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
Is virtue's prize: a better would you fix?
Then give humility a coach and six,
Justice a conqueror's sword, or truth a gown,
Or public spirit its great cure—a crown.
Weak, foolish man! will Heaven reward us there,
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
The boy and man an individual makes,
Yet sigh'st thou now for apples and for cakes?
Go, like the Indian, in another life,
Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,
As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,
As toys and empires, for a godlike mind.
Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
No joy, or be destructive of the thing;
How oft by these at sixty are undone
The virtues of a saint at twenty-one!
To whom can riches give repute or trust,
Content or pleasure, but the good and just?
Judges and senates have been bought for gold;
Esteem and love were never to be sold.
Oh fool! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human kind,
Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.
Honor and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.
Fortune in men has some small difference made,
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
The cobler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.

'What differ more,' you cry, 'than crown and cowl?'
I 'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool.
You 'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobler-like, the parson will be drunk;
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunello.
Stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings,
That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings.
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:
But by your father's worth, if yours you rate,
Count me those only who were good and great.
Go! if your ancient, but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,
Go! and pretend your family is young;
Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.
Look next on greatness: say where greatness lies?
'Where, but among the heroes and the wise?'
Heroes are much the same, the point 's agreed,
From Macedonia's madmen to the Swede:
The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find,
Or make, an enemy of all mankind!
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.
No less alike the politic and wise;
All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes;
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat;
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great:
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,

Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.
What's fame? a fancied life in others' breath,
A thing beyond us, e'en before our death.
Just what you hear you have; and what's unknown,
The same (my lord) if Tully's, or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside as much an empty shade
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead;
Alike or when or where they shone or shine,
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
A wit 's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest man 's the noblest work of God.
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
As justice tears his body from the grave;
When what to oblivion better were resign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
All fame is foreign but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:
One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.
In parts superior what advantage lies?
Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise?
'Tis but to know how little can be known,
To see all others' faults, and feel our own;
Condemned in business or in arts to drudge,
Without a second, or without a judge:

Truth would you teach, or save a sinking land!
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
Painful pre-eminence! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.
Bring then these blessings to a strict account:
Make fair deductions; see to what they 'mount,
How much of other each is sure to cost;
How each for other oft is wholly lost;
How inconsistent greater goods with these:
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease:
Think, and if still the things they envy call,
Say, wouldst thou be the man to whom they fall?
To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.
Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?
Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife.
If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:
Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
See Cromwell damn'd to everlasting fame!
If all, united, thy ambition call,
From ancient story, learn to scorn them all.
There, in the rich, the honor'd, fam'd, and great,
See the false scale of happiness complete!
In hearts of kings, or arms of queens, who lay,
How happy! those to ruin, these betray.
Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose;
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
And all that raised the hero sunk the man.
Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,
But stain'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for gold:
Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,

Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.
Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame!
What greater bliss attends their close of life?
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
The trophied arches, storied halls invade,
And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
Alas! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray,
Compute the morn and evening to the day;
The whole amount of their enormous fame,
A tale that blends their glory with their shame!
Know then this truth, (enough for man to know,)
'Virtue alone is happiness below.'
The only point where human bliss stands still,
And tastes the good without the fall to ill;
Where only merit constant pay receives,
Is bless'd in what it takes, and what it gives;
The joy unequall'd, if its end it gain,
And if it lose, attended with no pain:
Without satiety, though e'er so bless'd,
And but more relish'd as the more distress'd:
The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears:
Good, from each object, from each place acquired,
For ever exercised, yet never tired;
Never elated, while one man 's oppress'd;
Never dejected, while another 's bless'd:
And where no wants, no wishes can remain,
Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.
See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow!
Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know;
Yet poor with fortune and with learning blind,
The bad must miss, the good untaught will find;

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through nature up to nature's God;
Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
Joins Heaven and earth, and mortal and divine;
Sees that no being any bliss can know,
But touches some above, and some below:
Learns from the union of the rising whole,
The first, last purpose of the human soul;
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in love of God, and love of man.
For him alone, hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens still, and opens on his soul;
Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfined,
It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.
He sees why nature plants in man alone,
Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown:
(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
Are given in vain, but what they seek they find:)
Wise is her present; she connects in this
His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss;
At once his own bright prospect to be bless'd;
And strongest motive to assist the rest.
Self-love thus pushed to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbor's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part;
Grasp the whole world of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence;
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliss but height of charity.

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul
Must rise from individual to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;

The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace;
His country next, and next all human race:
Wide and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty bless'd,
And Heaven beholds its image in its breast.
  Come then, my friend! my genius! come along;
O master of the poet, and the song!
And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer,
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
O! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend?
That, urged by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
For wit's false mirror held up nature's light,
Show'd erring pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;
That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
That true self-love and social are the same;
That virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

It may be proper to observe, that some passages in the preceding Essay having been unjustly suspected of a tendency towards fate and naturalism, the author composed this prayer as the sum of all, to show that his system was founded in free-will, and terminated in piety: that the First Cause was as well the Lord and Governor of the universe as the Creator of it; and that, by submission to his will (the great principle enforced throughout the Essay) was not meant the suffering ourselves to be carried along by a blind determination, but a resting in a religious acquiescence, and confidence full of hope and immortality. To give all this the greater weight, the poet chose for his model the Lord's Prayer, which of all others, best deserves the title prefixed to this paraphrase.

Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood;
Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And, binding nature fast in Fate,
Left free the human will:

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than Heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives:
To enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay:
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's wo,
To hide the fault I see:
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by thy breath;
O lead me, wheresoe'er I go,
Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
And let thy will be done.

To thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all beings raise!
All nature's incense rise!